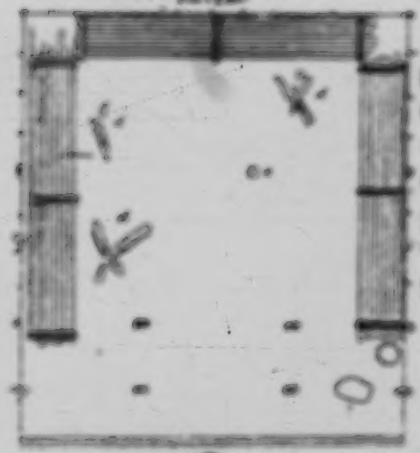
1: Tessmann--22 E-5 (1904-1909)1913 FH9 Fang FH9

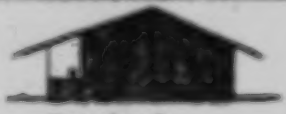
Drawing 1 /61/



344
354
353

Fig. 27a. Drawing 1. Ground Plan of a Meeting House in Majo (Ichumu Family): a, main post; b, skin drum; c, whetstone; d, fireplaces.

Drawing 2. Side view.



Drawing 2

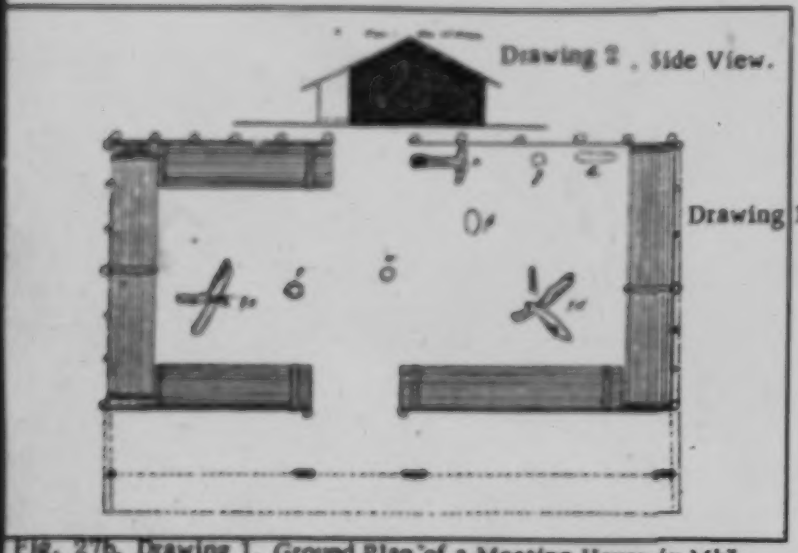


Fig. 27b. Drawing 1. Ground Plan of a Meeting House in Mbã (Esãkuman Family): a, main post; b, forge; c, bellows; d, nets for wild game (c and d are hanging); e, anvil (stone); f, fireplaces; g, seat (tree stump); h, wooden drum.

the lengthened pin of the back legs.

In some meeting houses the front legs project to form a semicircle which covers up the narrow sides of the head rests. The outer surface of these semicircles is either carved to look like a face or else incised and provided with decorative surfaces which are painted red and white (Fig. 29). /Fig. 28 appears here in the original text./ /67/

Next to the benches, the most important part of the furnishings of the meeting house consists of a number of logs which are placed together to form a fireplace (see Fig. 27). During the day the fire burns constantly, and during the night the logs are placed together so skillfully that the fire often keeps going until the next morning. /Fig. 29 appears here in the original text./ The importance of the cheering fire in the tropics is greater than one might believe; not only does it serve as a protection against the frequently severe morning chill and warm the room on days when the weather is rainy and cold, but it is also the only means of protection against the exceedingly annoying sand flies, Culicoides (afige), tiny, scarcely visible insects whose sting causes an unpleasant itch like that of stinging nettles.

For the rest, the furnishings of the meeting house consist only of such items as drums (wooden and skin drums), a whetstone, and, suspended from the roof, the large hunting net which the inhabitants use communally on drives. In some cases I also found gun racks (ekob e nga), Figure 30, which are attached to the wall in the same way as we attach clothes hooks. Guns are placed on these racks so they are handy in case of a sudden attack. Another form of this rack (Fig. 31), likewise not common, consists of a board which is pointed at the bottom and provided with a hole at the top. This gun rack (efa[k] -e-nga) is planted in the ground in front of the meeting house. The butt end of the rifle is placed on the ground and the barrel is put in the hole in the board.

The skulls of hunted animals are frequently kept in the meeting house as hunting trophies. Either they are held under the roof mats by means of poles, or they can be seen lying around on the roof; only large skulls, like those of elephants, are sometimes placed in front of the house. /Fig. 30 appears here in the original text./

1: Tessmann--25 E-5 (1904-1909)1913 FH9 Fang FH9

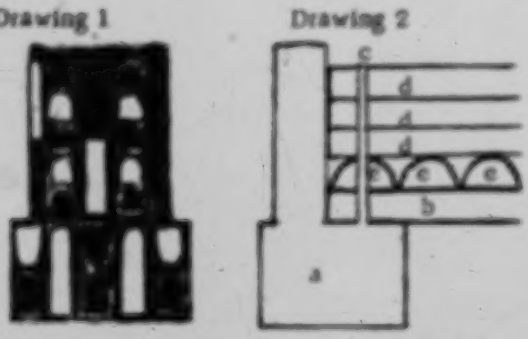


Fig. 29. Painted Socle of a Bench in a Meeting House, Fang Region.
Drawing 1, front view;
Drawing 2, side view.

In many meeting houses, furthermore, one sees /68/ a forge (Fig. 27b, Drawing 1 b) and the tools used by a smith, namely, a bellows suspended from the roof (Fig. 27b, Drawing 1 c) and a smith's stone (Fig. 27b, Drawing 1 e) which at the same time is used as a whetstone and also as a fan for the fire (eyuh e nduan), Figure 32. Finally we must also mention the famous tobacco pipe made from the stem of a banana leaf, which is placed across two hooks in the wall.

It goes without saying that in addition to the above-mentioned furnishings there are all kinds of rubbish lying around in the house, such as half-finished baskets, fishing nets, tools, leftover food, and so forth, scarcely designed to give the whole a more attractive appearance. /Fig. 31 appears here in the original text./

Fig. 30. Rifle Rack, Engugumo, Fang.

The meeting houses are very seldom embellished with decorative bark, either on the outside (Fig. 33) or on the inside. More frequently, however, we find the bark walls, especially on the gabled sides,

344
531

Fig. 33. Meeting House in Nschûggebot (Ojek Family), Spanish Guinea, with Decorative Boards of Bark.

344
353
531

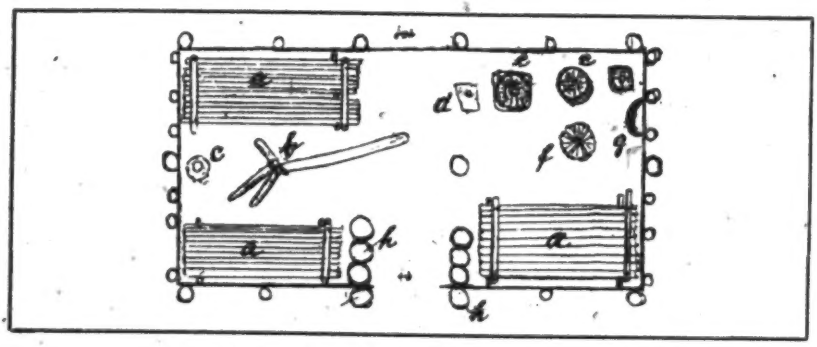
covered with charcoal drawings on the inside between the raffia boards. At this point, however, I cannot go into this art work in any greater detail (see Section 9, "Fine Arts").

344
517

If it were not for the people who enliven the house with their handicrafts and activities, /Fig. 32 appears here in the original text/ if the flaring fire did not lend the large, dark rooms a special, almost mysterious quality -- it would be too dreary. It is precisely here that one notices how everywhere only pulsating life, man in his sad and in his happy hours, not the material environment, is capable of attracting us. The same room which we disposed of just now with a disparaging glance is capable of creating a totally different impression in the evenings when the men and young /69/ /Fig. 33 appears here in the original text/ people gradually congregate in the meeting house in order to listen to the old, hunchbacked Njema-Ndongo tell of the mysterious and uncanny creatures of the fabulous world. Indefatigably they listen, however long he may spin out his yarn, motionless they look at him as he restlessly rubs his hands over the fire, wags his finger threateningly, separates or pushes aside the logs when the

344
517
538

[732]



342
359
354

Fig. 37. Ground Plan of a Pangwe Dwelling.
a, sleeping benches; b, fireplace (kitchen); c, pot with water; d, grindstone; e, baskets; f, bundle of maize cobs; g, hens' nest; h, door posts.

like the toys of a gigantic child that have just been finished by a giant toy dealer and are placed on the clean earth as though on a gigantic table. There are others in which one actually finds not a single house which does not let in the rain in torrents, not a single house whose walls are still standing straight and which does not provide entry for nocturnal reptiles between its walls and the ground. The reader should consider the significance of the name of the village of Ebualebambe ("tumble-down village") which, indeed, as I saw, did full justice to its name. 342 [103]

Whether the houses are carefully built or not, they always look depressed because they are too low in relation to their length, which seems even greater /73/ /Fig. 37 appears here in the original text/ than it actually is because of the way the houses are arranged in rows. One gets the same impression when one goes inside; on the average it is so low that one can stand in it only in a bent position for fear of coming into painful contact with the roof or the household utensils hanging from it. It is rare indeed that one can stand upright on one of the low sleeping benches without bumping his head.

As in the case of the meeting house, the interior of the dwelling (Fig. 37) has a single room which the Pangwe divides into atûm a nkiai and atûm akui, that is to say, into a western "room" (on a lower level) and an eastern "room" (on a higher level) which are to the left and right of the door. Figure 38 gives a view of the interior of a Fang hut. In this illustration one side wall and the right

342
352
353
354

Fig. 38. A Dwelling of the Fang.
The right half of the front wall and one side wall have been removed for a view of the interior.

342 half of the front wall have been removed in order to provide a full view.

The four corners or at least three of them are occupied by
342 sleeping benches (Fig. 37 a) which are constructed exactly like
352 the benches of the meeting houses. The distance between the
353 head and foot rest, however, is only about three quarters body length, so it is necessary to lie on them with one's legs drawn up. The sleeping benches extend to the door posts and thus take up most of the room in the house. On one of the narrow sides and
[354] between two sleeping benches is the fireplace (Figure 37 b), that is, a few logs placed together and serving both as a hearth and a stove. Over the fireplace is attached a device for drying and storing food and dishes which is put together in the following manner (Fig. 39). A frame covered with plaited raffia strips is laid over the door posts (a) and two forked sticks driven into the corners. This is the "pot loft," akáń e mvé (c); one can usually see a number of pots and a clay water bottle on it. Other things, which even for the Negro cannot be designated as "valuable possessions," /74/ /Fig. 38 appears here in the original text/ are also found there, such as banana bowls, maize spindles, to whose use I shall return later, and so forth. Under the pot loft hangs the drying loft or "ground-nut loft," akáń owŭnŏ (d). As the name indicates, this loft

serves only for the storage of groundnuts and is likewise usually made of plaited raffia strips. Then there is the most important household item for the housewife, the pantry, in the form of a storage box, bū bū, or bū u (e), intended primarily for meat and other delicacies. This box is often very nicely made with raffia pith. In front it usually has a small protruding ledge on which salt, pepper, and spoons may be placed, and thus it serves as a kind of "dumb-waiter"; at the side it has an opening that is closed by means of a sliding door made of pith. The box fills the space between the beds so that it is barely possible to stand there. One or two drying or roasting boards, etăn (f and g), hang under the box, just above the fire. These boards are used for roasting groundnuts and for drying things.

On the opposite wall at the same level a similar frame is put up, over which drying boards can be placed and from whose front edge the women's long baskets (nkūn I) are hung. There is floor space under this frame, a sleeping bench may be placed there, covered with baskets, grindstones, and other tools, or with the assorted possessions of the head of the household. A person who enters the house for the first time finds himself in the middle of the passage between front and back door, not knowing which way to turn. To make room at all it would be necessary to clear everything out; otherwise a European would find the house uninhabitable. In the north, /75/ especially among the Bulu and in part also among the Ntum, the huts are somewhat more spacious and habitable.

For hanging up baskets, calabashes, satchels, and other objects on the wall, the Pangwe makes use of a natural hook (ekŏ'by), that is, a piece of a tree trunk which is cut out just above and below a branch. The branch is cut off, the remaining stump is cut more or less to a point, and then the whole piece is inserted, in the same position as it was on the tree, between the longitudinal raffia strips on the inner side of the wall. Objects are very readily attached to the wall by means of raffia stalks stuck between the mats, from whose free ends they are suspended.

An important piece of furniture is the round, three-legged stool (kpā III), Figure 40, carved out of wood and decorated all around its edge with ornamental chip carving.

342
352
353

its edge with ornamental chip carving. It is placed on the ground, often in the vicinity of the door posts, and is considered, so to speak, as a place of honor -- for strangers and the paterfamilias -- like our sofa.

412
356

As a final household implement the sweeper should be mentioned. It appears in various forms, depending on whether it is used in the dwelling, for the benches of the meeting house, for the meeting house floor, or for the village square.

[824]

For the house a broom evũ̌ a[k], Figure 41 a, is used, made of raffia leaves tied together in the shape of a fan. "More elegant" brooms are used by the Jaunde for the benches of the meeting houses. These are made of pieces of liana stalks, Ertela scandens Benth., Leguminosae, called ntṹ (b), or of the flowers of the oil palm (c). The pieces of liana stalk are slit so that they form something like a brush; these brooms therefore correspond more or less to our dusters. A third form of broom (Fig. 42) consists of two little wooden boards tied with strips to a handle. /Fig. 39 appears here in the original text./ /76/ It resembles our snow shovels, but it is by no means to be found in every village, and even where it is found it is infrequently used.

B7
824

In the preceding descriptions the reader will have been struck by the frequency with which the raffia palm is mentioned as construction material. It is indeed true that this palm, called "bamboo" in Negro English, is by far the most important and most valuable plant

[342
353]

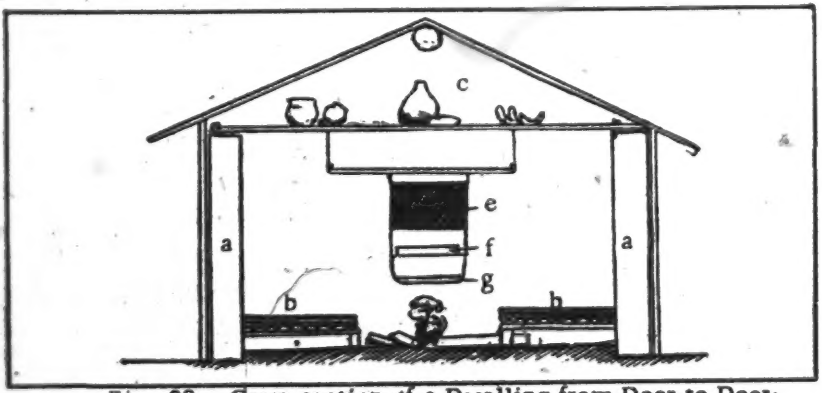


Fig. 39. Cross-section of a Dwelling from Door to Door: a, door posts; b, sleeping benches; c, pot loft; d, loft for drying groundnuts; e, pantry; f and g, roasting boards.

532
353

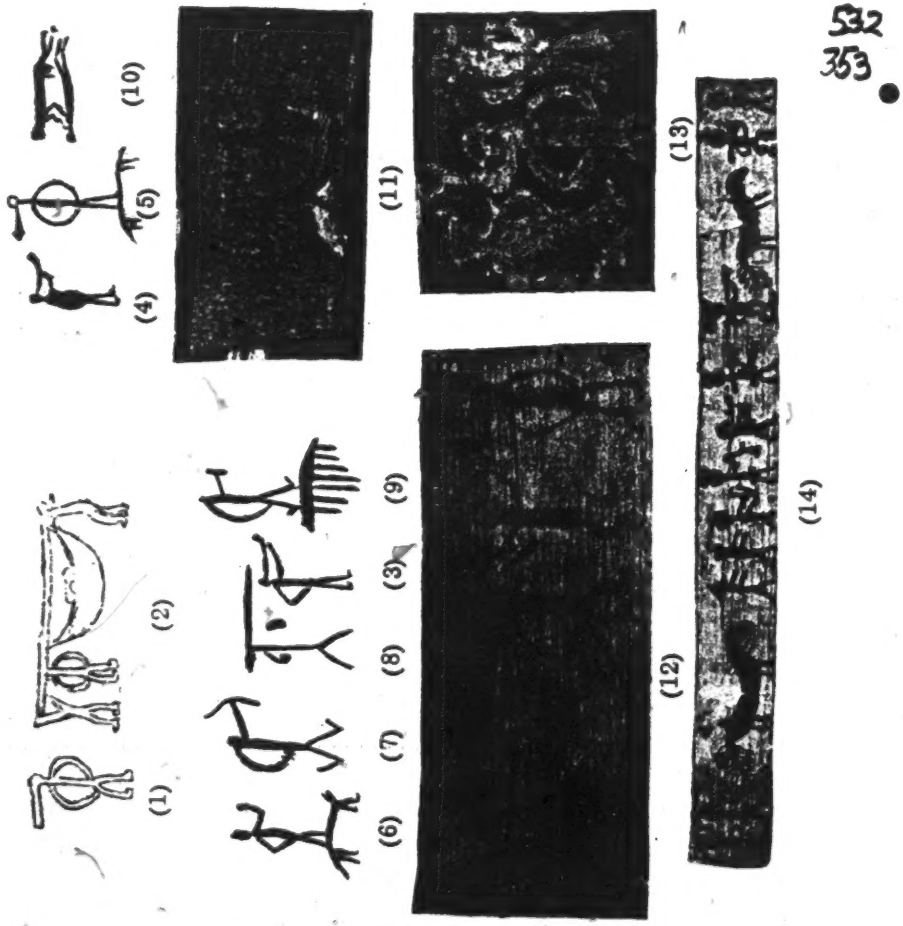


Fig. 225. Drawings on House Walls (Drawings 1-10) and on Bark Plates (Drawings 11-14). Drawings 1, 3, 4, and 8. Man with a tobacco pipe. Drawing 2. A European carried in a hammock. Drawings 5 and 11. Man with tobacco pipe on horseback. Drawings 6 and 9. Man on horseback. Drawing 7. Man with a dog whip. Drawing 10. Coitus. Drawing 12. Three people and an animal (chameleon?). Drawing 13. People. Drawing 14. Caravan of two Whites on horseback, accompanied by soldiers.

B. Drawing and Painting.

532 353 Drawings are scribbled on the exterior bark walls of the houses especially by children or adolescents. More rarely drawings are made on special bark strips that are attached to the inside walls of the meeting houses.

532 177 The drawing motifs are taken from secular life and frequently from a foreign culture (Fig. 225). Most frequently, tobacco pipes, /273/ /Fig. 225 appears here in the original text/ smoking men, and riders on horseback are represented in the drawings. The riders are regularly placed with both feet on their horses in the manner of Buffalo Bill. The horses themselves are always badly drawn; they might as well belong to the family of lizards (Drawing 6), or for that matter they might be identified as cats or centipedes (Drawing 9). At best they are equipped with a long, fishbone-shaped tail (Drawings 11 and 14), so that one immediately suspects that the artist has never seen a horse. This suspicion is strengthened when one observes a preponderant number of drawings of horses even in the remotest villages where it is certain that none of the inhabitants has as yet been to the coast. /274/ /Fig. 226 appears here in the original text./ It is therefore probable that the ancestors of the present-day draftsmen saw horses among the [174] equestrian peoples of Adamawa or other African peoples in an earlier era before the Pangwe moved to their present location. The knowledge of this animal would then have been transmitted to their descendants by means of pictures that were copied again and again.

In villages affected by European culture -- primarily those along the caravan routes -- we frequently find drawings of Europeans. Often, to correspond with their skin color, these are painted white; some drawings show them by themselves, others have them being carried in a hammock and accompanied by servants; others again show them on horseback riding ahead of the soldiers who are accentuated by red caps. The rider's legs are drawn behind the animal (Drawing 14), just as in the drawings of our children.

531 Otherwise we find people frequently represented with spears or rifles, but that is about the extent of artistic ideas. Drawings of